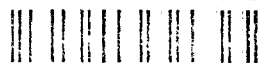


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# STUDY PROJECT

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THE LEADERSHIP SUM

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD M. GREEN  
Air National Guard

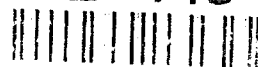
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THE LEADERSHIP SUM  
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Richard M. Green  
Air National Guard

Colonel Robert A. Brace II  
Project Adviser



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## ABSTRACT

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Leadership has been the subject of countless books and articles over the years. Those who have studied this somewhat elusive topic, along with many who by virtue of their success as a leader, have attempted to reveal what they believe are the key ingredients to becoming a successful leader. To some degree, they all may be correct, because in fact, there may not be a simple formula for success in leadership. However, one thing is certain, every organization, no matter how large or small, including nations, armies, corporations, and families, need some form of leadership. With leadership, there is direction and purpose, which stimulates motivation and movement; without leadership, the course is unknown and there certainly can be no vision of the future, which "leads" to stagnation.

The purpose of this paper is to take yet another look at leadership. This study was not designed to prove or disprove an idea conceived prior to my first visit to the library, rather it presents a new perspective on leadership which emerged from my research. My concept, which I call "The Leadership Sum", is not intended to be the final word or elusive formula for success as a leader. However, I do hope that my concept of presenting leadership enables potential leaders to develop those attributes essential for good leadership and to make the most of their opportunity to lead.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1, Leadership "Attribute Levels"

Figure 2, "The Leadership Sum"

Figure 3, Attribute Levels, "The Weakest Link"



## INTRODUCTION

"Leadership is an influencing relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." JOSEPH C. ROST<sup>1</sup>

The power of leadership has intrigued me for almost as long as I can remember. Having served in the military for over twenty years, I have seen outstanding leaders who I would follow and do almost anything for, good leaders who get the job done but lack that certain spark, and poor leaders who I wouldn't follow across a busy street.

The qualities or attributes that separate the outstanding leaders from those who don't quite make the grade have generated a multitude of books and articles on this subject. In 1991, Joseph C. Rost published a book called Leadership for the Twenty-First Century. In this book he points out how two scholars on leadership, Stogdill (1974) and later Bass (1981), collected and analyzed some 4725 studies on leadership. Stogdill concluded, "the endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership."<sup>2</sup> Rost also researched over 312 books, chapters, and journal articles written during the 1980s on this subject, coming to a similar conclusion.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, the attempts to define leadership and the attributes or traits common to great leaders has not suffered from a lack of interest in the subject. James MacGregor Burns has concluded that, "leadership, is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth."<sup>4</sup>



Having an interest in leadership, seeing it as fuel that ignites the engine in an organization, I began to take note of those traits or characteristics of leaders that seemed to make a difference. Then, after hearing what seemed to be a rather uninspiring speech from a leader who I thought had all the attributes of a potentially outstanding leader, a thought came to my mind. Could it be that the leader's ability to effectively communicate, inspire, or sell his or her vision to the group, no matter how large or small, was the critical factor that determined whether or not a leader with all the attributes and potential for a high level of leadership would achieve either success or failure as a leader?

The difference between the perceived effectiveness of Presidents Carter and Reagan serve as a good case in point. It is generally accepted that President Carter was one of our country's most informed and intelligent presidents. One could also argue that his efforts toward peace in the Middle East and human rights were very admirable. However, as president, most would also agree that his ability to inspire the general public left something to be desired and thus generated the perception that he was a weak leader.<sup>5</sup>

Contrast President Carter's performance with that of President Reagan. Here, we have a handsome actor who achieved moderate success as governor of California. However, as president, he was not perceived to have command over the vast amount of information one would expect a

president should know to make the tough decisions of that office. But, to most, he was the "great communicator" who had that ability to inspire us and lead our country from the low points during previous administrations of Vietnam and Desert One to decisive victories in Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm during the Bush administration.<sup>6</sup>

At this point, I thought I might be on to something, so I decided to research what others had written on the role of communications in leadership. How much importance had authors and successful leaders attributed to one's ability to communicate effectively and success in leadership?

As a starting point, I choose to review the attributes each author listed as most important for successful leadership. It didn't take long before two general approaches seemed to be taking shape. First, many of the authors took a "laundry list" approach to leadership attributes. That is, they seemed to list everything they thought might be important for good leadership and any techniques that worked specifically for them. The average list normally topped off at about twenty items. While these lists were certainly informative, the importance of each attribute seemed to ~~lose~~ its impact due to the large number of attributes the author felt were important.

For example, Major General Perry Smith has published a list of twenty guidelines for leadership.<sup>7</sup> While each item is applicable and useful, one gets the feeling that the last three items should be, "brave, clean, and reverent".

Second, many of the lists had a common thread to the guidelines or attributes listed, allowing some of the items to be grouped together to form a shorter list of general attribute categories. Using the Perry Smith guidelines again as an example, one could see where guidelines such as establishing and maintaining high standards of dignity, integrity, and trust, could be grouped under the general category of "character". Also, being a good teacher and communicator, being a motivator, and having a sense of humor, could be grouped under communications skills.<sup>8</sup>

At this point, an article I had read by Colonel Mitchell Zais, entitled Generalship and Senior Command, seemed to be making more and more sense. In his article, he listed four general categories of attributes he believed were necessary for high command. They are intellect, knowledge, character, and skills.<sup>9</sup> He further subdivided these general categories into more specific areas, but the organization of his approach seemed to capture the essence of the attributes a leader must possess to be successful.

It was at this point where my own thoughts on leadership began to take shape. If success in leadership could be limited by a leader's ability to communicate, would success also be limited by deficiencies in any other categories such as intellect, knowledge, or character? Or, could a leader compensate for deficiencies in any of these areas and still be successful? Also, were there other factors beyond these general categories of attributes that influenced success in leadership?

The result of my thoughts on this subject is what I call "The Leadership Sum". The Leadership Sum is a concept of looking at leadership by relating the levels a leader attains in each of the five essential attribute categories (Quality Factors) with other important influences (Difference Factors) to explain why or possibly even predict if a potential leader will succeed or fail.

Before I go any farther, a point should be made. From my own experiences and what I have read, I believe leadership is an art, not a science. While my approach is quantitative in nature, the purpose of assigning theoretical levels to each of the attributes is to illustrate that individuals in fact attain different levels of potential based on inborn talents and effort. I am convinced that to be successful as a leader, one must synthesize all of one's knowledge, courage, character, skills, and intellect with other influencing factors to exercise the art of leadership. High marks alone in all of the attributes will not assure success as a leader. The method in which the leader blends and pours his leadership skills into the organization will be the ultimate test which determines success or failure.

But, what is "success in leadership"? For the purpose of this study, success in leadership will be judged against two criteria. First, has the individual leader developed and maximized his or her leadership potential by reaching high levels of competence in each of the five attribute categories? Second, does the leader accomplish the intent

of leadership as expressed by Rost; i.e., are "real changes that reflect the leaders and followers mutual purposes" realized?

Finally, the Leadership Sum raises several other interesting questions. First, viewing the Leadership Sum as a quantitative look at leadership, could a person's potential for leadership be measured or evaluated or will leaders just naturally rise to the top? Second, is there an answer to the age old question, "are leader's born or made"? Finally, what is the most effective method or technique for teaching leadership?

Since I am a military officer, this study will be directed toward military leadership. However, examples of leadership from politics, business, and sports will be used to emphasize points.

## "LEADERSHIP SUM, THE CONCEPT"

The art of leadership on the surface may appear to be a rather straight forward concept. Many believe that good leadership is a natural result of knowing your job, treating people fairly, and hard work. They may be correct. But, if leadership is an art, is there more to it than simply doing a good job, and can it be taught? Take for example the art of painting. Is it possible to teach an artist where and when to put those most important dabs of paint that separate a good painting from a masterpiece, or is it an inborn gift? Some artists have the gift while others may never acquire that magic touch. But, the fact also remains that there are thousands of artists, who even though they may never be capable of producing a masterpiece, are truly expert in their field and paint wonderful pictures. Does this group of artists possess the gift, or was it hard work and a mastering of the fundamentals that makes the difference?

This observation is true for almost any field of endeavor. We all can cite examples of an individual who clearly possesses that extra spark of expertise, personality, creativity, or drive, that captures the hearts and attention of everyone who is exposed to that person's special talent. Some of these individuals might include Lee Iacocca in corporate America, Eisenhower in both the military and politics, and Arnold Palmer in sports. There are hundreds of examples, but clearly, individuals such as these have that something extra, which if sold in a bottle,

could make anyone millions.

But the question remains. How did these individuals reach the pinnacle of success and become top leaders in their field? Was Eisenhower born with a predetermined destiny that he would become Supreme Allied Commander and President of the United States or was it a special personality trait that drove him to be the best? Or, were these individuals who simply had leadership potential and were "in the right place at the right time"?

Take for example the master painter. While having that magic touch to know exactly when and where to stroke those special dabs of paint, he or she must also have mastered the fundamentals of color, application, and tools of the trade, to be in a position to exercise the magic touch.

In the military, most would agree that to reach the strategic level of leadership (four star rank), the officer must possess high levels of character, knowledge, intellect, skills, and courage, commensurate with that level of leadership. Deficiencies in any of these areas would most certainly have been exposed at some point in their career, inhibiting their progress up the ladder of success.

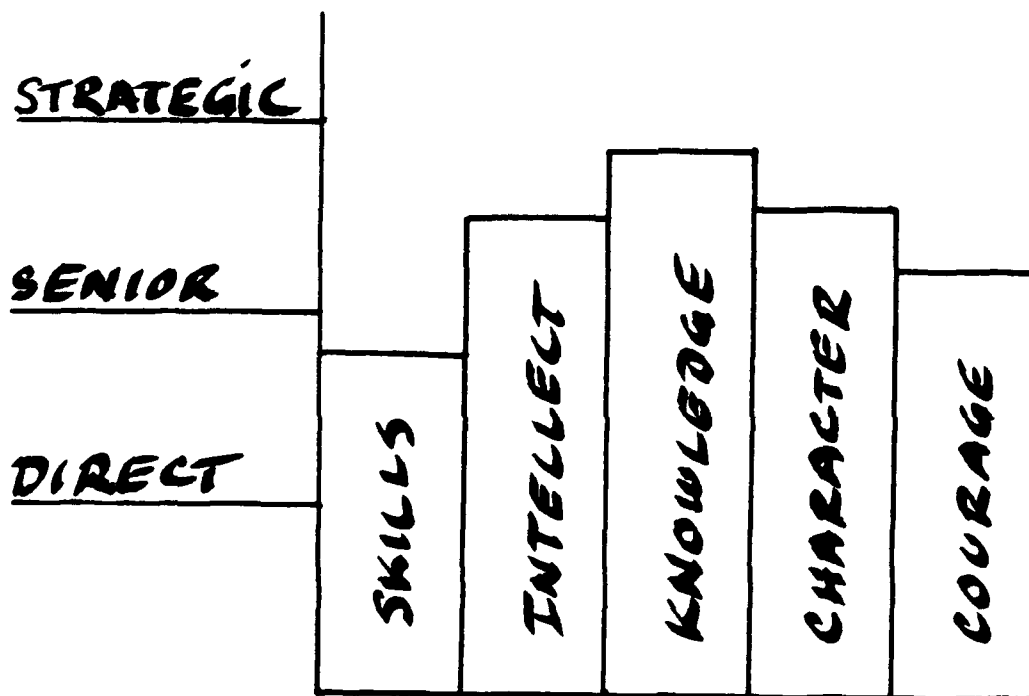
This concept of reaching levels in each of the leadership attributes is the basis of the Leadership Sum. If one accepts the notion that successful leaders have attained high levels of competence in the five attribute categories of; intellect, character, knowledge, skills, and courage, then it might also follow that a deficiency in any

of these areas might also limit a person's leadership potential.(Figure 1) Minor deficiencies could be compensated for or even hidden, but significant deficiencies could present a barrier too tough to overcome.

The Army War College method of teaching leadership also lends itself to the concept of levels. By dividing leadership into three distinct levels; direct, senior, and strategic, students are taught that the leadership skills and competencies practiced by military officers and their civilian counterparts progress from structured and focused at the direct level to complex and ambiguous at the strategic level.<sup>10</sup> Thus, each succeeding level of leadership requires a higher level of competency due to the expanded complexity of the leadership situation. Using this same logic, it follows that an Army officer's knowledge would also need to progress from an entry level such as knowing how to use his or her individual weapon to knowing the capabilities and methods for employing all the weapons of a coalition force.

Professional military education is also organized using a system of leadership levels. As a military officer progresses from commissioning as a second lieutenant to general officer rank, he or she will have completed three levels of professional military education. In the Air Force, those schools include Squadron Officer's School, Air Command and Staff College, and the Air War College. Each school prepares the officer for the next level of leadership with the War College being the highest level of military





Leadership "Attribute Levels"

Figure 1

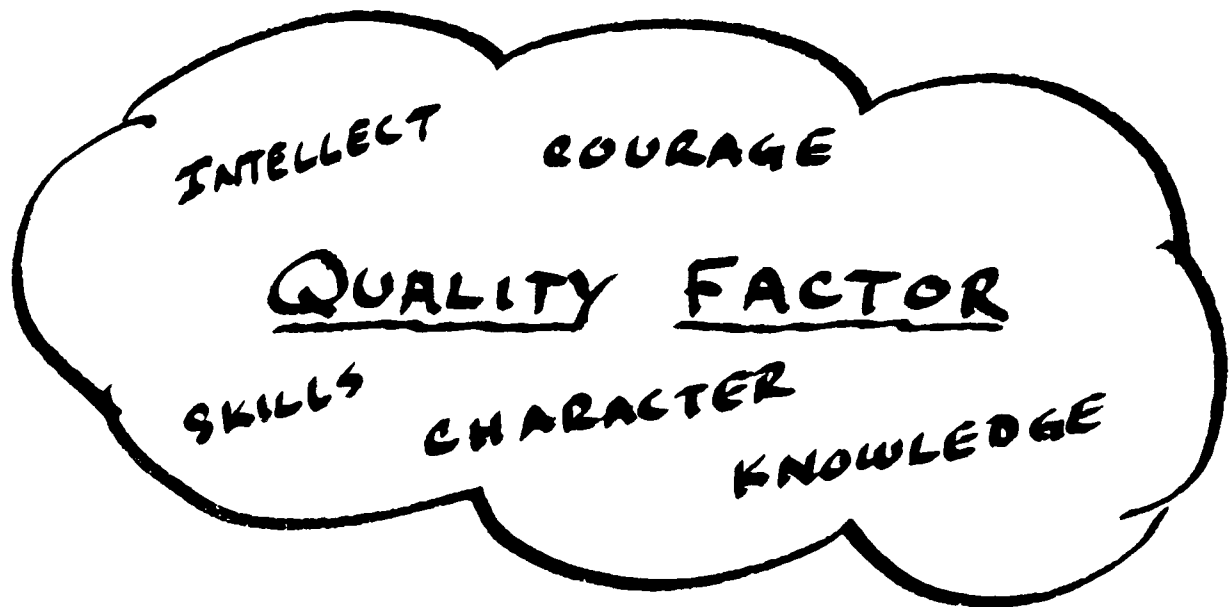
leadership training.

However, other factors beyond the five attribute categories, which I call the "Quality Factor", have a strong influence on an officer reaching the highest levels of leadership or even their individual potential.

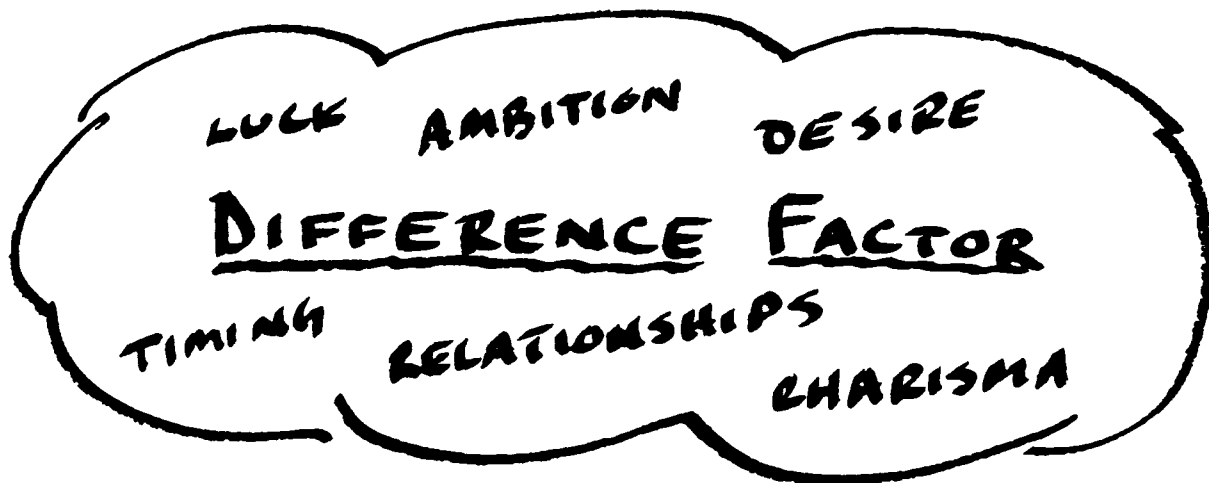
These are factors we are all familiar with. They include such hard to define concepts as luck, desire, ambition, right place and right time, relationships, charisma, and a host of other factors that influence an officer's career and ultimate leadership position. These factors are real, and because they can "make the difference" in an officer's career, I call the net impact of these influences the "Difference Factor".

Thus, the Leadership Sum or ultimate leadership position, conceptually, is the result of adding the "Quality Factor" which is a measure of leadership attribute competency, to the "Difference Factor", which explains how a multitude of other influences can affect leaders with similar potential from all reaching the top. (Figure 2)

To clarify each of the two influencing factors of the Leadership Sum, they will be covered separately.



PLUS



EQUALS

"THE LEADERSHIP SUM"

"The Leadership Sum"

Figure 2

## THE QUALITY FACTOR

"Don't say things. What you are stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary." RALPH WALDO EMERSON<sup>11</sup>

Most of us are familiar with this quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson. I use it because it drives home the point that who we are as leaders, our values, beliefs, and actions, is projected like a feature film to those we lead. In today's world, a leader cannot say one thing and do another without eventually paying the price for those inconsistencies.

Instant world-wide communications, a more informed public, and a demand for competent, fair leadership requires leaders to practice what they preach, and they better have a good sermon. The public is demanding quality leadership.

Recent examples in the political arena highlight this point. Senator Gary Hart was pressured out of the 1988 presidential election for an extramarital affair and Governor Bill Clinton is presently answering charges that his personal life is not quite up to standards for the same reason. In the past, sexual indiscretion by presidents or presidential candidates was either overlooked or deemed not applicable to their ability to do the job. Presidents Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Kennedy were all considered excellent leaders, but all three also had a reputation for indiscretion.<sup>12</sup> However, today the issue of infidelity is considered important by many and believed to be an indicator of weak character. If a leader can't control himself, how could he or she possibly control the country?

Is the question of infidelity versus ability to perform as a leader relevant? The answer to that question is personal in nature and best left to each of our own judgements, but, what we read and see in newsprint and television, tells us loud and clear, the public is demanding quality leadership.

But, what is quality in a leader? What are those attributes that build the foundation for quality leadership? Volumes of books and articles have been written containing lists of what each author believed were the key attributes or qualities for successful leadership.

Most of these "laundry lists" contain between ten and twenty guidelines or attributes. A few examples of these lists include; MG Perry M. Smith's twenty guidelines for leadership,<sup>13</sup> fourteen attributes described by John Gardner in his book On Leadership,<sup>14</sup> seventeen leadership qualities outlined in Robert Weiss's Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun,<sup>15</sup> and ten attributes listed in Army FM 22-103,<sup>16</sup> just to name a few.

We have all read articles such as these and most would agree they contain useful information and guidance, which if followed, would help us become better leaders. But, while each of the items listed has value, the sheer number of attributes listed seems to dilute the importance of any one particular attribute.

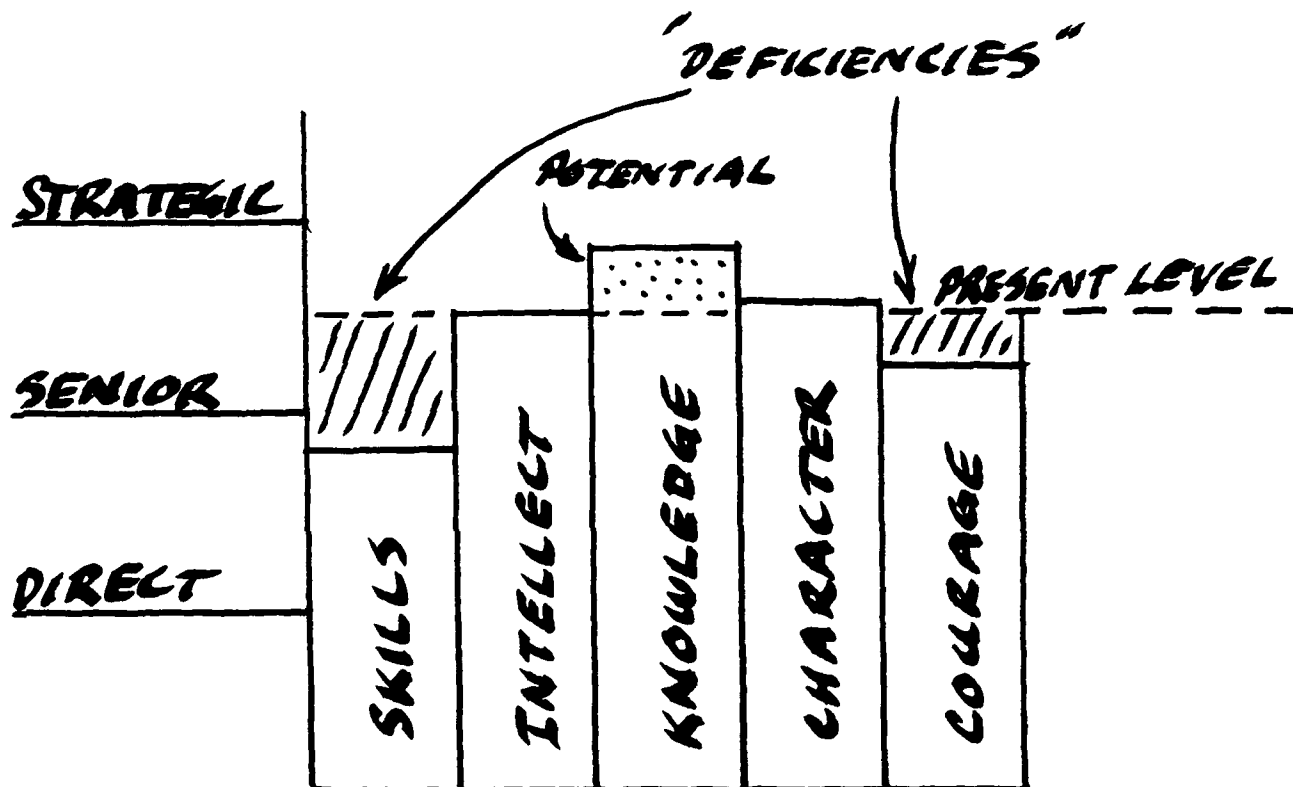
Certainly they are all important, but could the attributes be expressed in a way that described the concept of quality leadership in a format that makes sense, without

the long lists?

At this point, the grouping of leadership attributes into four categories seemed to be making sense, and, my own thoughts on a leadership concept began to form. First, I thought that courage should be added to the list. Although Col Zais included courage as a subset of character, it seemed to me that courage was important enough to stand alone as a major attribute category. This assertion was backed up by a number of other authors on leadership and even military manuals on the subject, which listed courage as a separate leadership attribute. Some of these authors include, General Ridgeway, LTG Rosencrans, William Lassey and Richard Fernanded, LTG Eaker, Clausewitz, and even Army FM 22-103.

My next thought was that these five attribute categories, when taken as a whole, defined the quality aspect of a leader. If a leader possessed high levels of competence in each of these attribute categories, his or her potential for leadership would certainly be increased. Clearly, a person with strong character or courage would have more potential than a person of weak character or one who lacked courage. But, that potential might equate to a level no higher than the weakest attribute.(Figure 3)

Let me explain in other terms. In manufacturing, the industrial engineer understands that the maximum number of items a production line can turn out is equal to the time it takes to complete the slowest operation on that line. Each



Attribute Levels, "The Weakest Link"

Figure 3

separate operation could take ten seconds to complete, but, if any one operation took fifteen seconds, the best you could do is produce one completed item every fifteen seconds. Thus, to improve productivity on the line, a method would need to be devised to reduce the fifteen second operation to optimally ten seconds. Using this example, it is easy to see how one weakness can affect the whole operation.

As another example, take the politicians mentioned earlier. While the character flaws identified with sexual promiscuity might not be enough to affect a politician being elected as a senator or governor, it might rule that person out as a viable candidate for president.

Thus, the quality factor could be limited by the weakest link of the five attribute categories. However, as stated earlier, minor weaknesses could be compensated for by the leader or overcome by the difference factor which will be explained later.

To fully understand the Quality Factor concept, two principles need to be clarified. Those are; (1) what characteristics define each of the attribute categories, and (2) what does the term "level" mean as it applies to each of the attributes.

First, let me explain the characteristics that make up each of the attribute categories.

#### INTELLECT

"No great commander was ever a man of limited intellect." CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ<sup>17</sup>



This statement by Carl Von Clausewitz clearly summarizes the impact of intellect on high command and leadership. But what is intellect, and is it really necessary to have a genius I.Q. to reach the highest levels of leadership? We can all cite examples of great generals who somewhere along the line let us know of their high I.Q. For example, in Desert Storm the media was quick to inform us that General Schwarzkopf had a genius I.Q. But, does a I.Q. score define intellect?

Colonel Zais points out in his article that intellect is not the same thing that is measured on an I.Q. test or the score one achieves on a Scholastic Aptitude Test. I.Q. stops developing around the age of 18.<sup>18</sup> So, if I.Q. level made the difference, identifying potential leaders by their high I.Q. scores would be a simple discriminator. If early evaluations or childhood performance were valid indicators, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, and Ludwig Von Beethoven ,who were slow starters, might not have achieved success in their respective fields.<sup>19</sup> The term intellect implies a "power of knowing"<sup>20</sup> and the ability to reason or perceive relationships.<sup>21</sup> If intellect is the power of knowing, then what knowledge does one need to know to be intellectual and does intellect then apply only to one's knowledge in a specific field of endeavor; i.e., could a person be intellectual in a military sense but not in a philosophical or cultural sense, or does intellect apply in a general sense across the board? Also,

if intellect is the power of knowing (knowledge), then it would follow that a person could have a direct influence on intellect by extensive reading and study. Thus, knowledge gained through reading and experience could have a positive effect on intellect. Leaders such as Napoleon and General George C. Marshall, who were thought to be intellectual, were known for their extensive reading and study of military leaders and history.<sup>22</sup> Were these leaders intellectual because of their reading, or did they possess an inborn high intellect and reading only served to reinforce the gift? There may be no conclusive answer to this question, but it seems evident that intellect is stimulated by reading and study.

Intellect also implies the ability to use knowledge with the term "power" and the phrase "ability to reason or perceive relationships." Herein may lie the real key to intellect. We have all heard the cliché "knowledge is power". But, is it? Knowledge in itself may have a limited amount of power, but if viewed from an intellectual point of view, the real value of knowledge is the ability to use that knowledge (power of knowing).

The ability to use intellectual power has been developed by Dr. Elliot Jacques and the term used to describe this ability is called "cognitive power". Cognitive power is defined as the longest period for which a person is able to set goals for specific projects, make plans for those projects, and then carry them out. Dr. Jacques

illustrates this concept through what he calls the "Seven Cognitive Levels". This concept describes how a person at the lowest level operates or works at one task at a time while a person at the highest level is able to operate cognitively on complex world-level problems.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, we can define intellect, as it relates to the Quality Factor, as the level of one's power of knowing and ability to reason or perceive relationships to solve cognitive complex problems or projects.

Colonel Zais points out an interesting study conducted by a professor in Vancouver, Canada. He assessed the cognitive complexity of contending generals based on writing samples just prior to the battle in question. In almost all cases, the more cognitively complex general won. In those cases when he didn't, he was always vastly outnumbered.<sup>24</sup>

## CHARACTER

When one thinks of leadership, the first attribute that comes to mind is often "character". It is a quality we directly relate to success in leadership and most would agree that truly effective leadership cannot take place without strong character. History is riddled with examples of leaders such as Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Hussein, and Noriega who's character and intentions were certainly questionable, however, considering their methods of absolute power and coercion through fear, is it realistic to call what they exercised "leadership"? John Gardner makes this

point in On Leadership" by saying leadership should not be confused with status, power, or official authority.<sup>25</sup>

Recently, I came across an interesting quote by John Luther concerning character. He says "good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are, to some extent, a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it piece by piece, by thought, choice, courage, and determination."<sup>26</sup>

For most, it is not difficult to pick out those individuals who possess strong character. We see people of strong character as those who exhibit good values and morals, high ethics, self-discipline, and sound judgement.<sup>27</sup>

However, there is another term that is closely associated with character. That term is integrity. Integrity brings with it an uncompromising adherence to a code of moral values, sincerity, honesty, and avoidance of deception.<sup>28</sup>

President Eisenhower once said, "Character in many ways is everything in leadership. It is made up of many things, but, I would say character is really integrity."<sup>29</sup>

MG Perry Smith in his book Taking Charge, observes that "leaders should exude integrity. Leaders should not only talk about integrity, they must also operate at a high level of integrity... Of all the qualities a leader must have, integrity is the most important."<sup>30</sup> Thus, character and integrity are used somewhat interchangeably to illustrate the moral and ethical qualities in leadership.

Clausewitz's view of character is slightly different than the ideas presented above. In On War, he states, "a strong character is one that will not be unbalanced by the most powerful emotions" and "a man has strength of character, or simply has character if he sticks to his convictions whether these derive from his own opinions or someone else's, whether they represent principles, attitudes, sudden insights, or any other mental force... obviously a man whose opinions are constantly changing, even though this is in response to his own reflections, would not be called a man of character."<sup>31</sup>

But how important is character? Gen Matthew B. Ridgeway, US Army (Ret) summarizes it's importance in the following quote, "character is the bedrock on which the whole edifice of leadership rests".<sup>32</sup>

Whether it is called character or integrity, either way, a leader must possess it and demonstrate it to win the hearts and dedication of those who would follow.

## KNOWLEDGE

Of the five leadership attribute categories, knowledge seems to receive the least emphasis as a requirement for success in leadership. If a senior or strategic leader needs to know something, all he or she needs to do is assign a staff officer to produce a short synopsis of the subject in question and the knowledge square is filled.

That approach may work for some and in certain

situations is necessary, however, knowledge could be one of the more important links in the chain of successful leadership.

Consider the following quote from The Leadership Factor by John Kotter, "under conditions of large scale and complexity, the empirical evidence available suggests that creating an intelligent agenda often demands knowledge of a truly massive amount of information about specific products, technologies, markets, and people. Without that knowledge, it simply is not possible to produce good visions or smart strategies, or to judge whether the visions and strategies suggested by others makes sense."<sup>33</sup> While this statement is directed at corporate knowledge, it most certainly follows that it also applies to military leadership.

At the U.S. Army War College, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to hear presentations by many of our nation's top military, corporate, and political leaders. It is evident from their presentations and answers to the questions that follow, that they possess a vast amount of both detailed and general knowledge.

Clausewitz in On War points out that "education, almost regardless of the field of specialization, undoubtedly enhances our intellectual sensibilities, and one of the ways in which it does so is by expanding our awareness of connections between events or insights remote in time and in circumstances. In any field, theory is valuable to the degree that it promotes much expanded awareness in a

specialized form and avoids falling into pedanticism or dogma."<sup>34</sup>

Army FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, effectively summarizes the type of knowledge required for senior leaders, " those at senior levels provide wise and timely vision-based guidance founded on three perspectives; First, they possess a well developed historical perspective, second, senior leaders and commanders know operations and have a solid operational perspective. Finally, they insure they understand their units and have an appropriate organizational perspective."<sup>35</sup> This approach to knowledge makes sense, and one can easily see how important it is for leaders to possess high levels of knowledge in each of the three areas.

The U.S military recognizes this importance and professional military education at all levels helps officers and enlisted members develop the knowledge necessary for good leadership.

Great military leaders throughout history have demonstrated high levels of knowledge and excellence in education. General's Eisenhower, Patton, and Marshall all graduated very high in their class at West Point. General MacArthur was so brilliant he did not attend service schools as a student, but was assigned as an instructor, even though he had never been through the course.<sup>36</sup> General Omar Bradley said, "all of us worked hard...we studied everything we could get our hands on. You start working hard right from the first. You can't say later in life, I will start

studying. You have got to start in the beginning."<sup>37</sup>

Finally, this quote pertaining to General George Marshall illustrates how this great leader prepared himself for top leadership positions:

"As a child, Marshall was a voracious reader of the books in his father's library. He continued the habit at VMI, concentrating upon military books. As an officer, he never wasted a precious moment during his training years in preparing himself for the great tasks and responsibilities that lay before him. Throughout his Army career, Gen Marshall had a passion for knowledge. As a cadet at VMI, he went over the terrain of many of the battles of the Civil War. In the Philippines, he visited every major battlefield of the war against Spain. He also studied the post-war campaigns against the recalcitrant Filipinos."<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the importance of knowledge cannot be underestimated. While the spectrum of what a leader must know changes from specific knowledge such as knowing how to use a personal weapon at the direct level, to knowing how to employ all the weapons of a coalition force at the strategic level, it is clear, that a strong and ever growing base of knowledge is a must for successful leadership. It is also clear that the accumulation of knowledge is a discipline which should be initiated early in life and be continually built upon to properly prepare a person for top leadership positions.

#### COURAGE

Upon receiving the Medal of Honor, General Douglas MacArthur was quoted as saying, "of all military attributes, the one that arouses the greatest admiration is



courage."<sup>39</sup>

Military history is full of great leaders whose courage in the face of either personal danger or a gut wrenching decision, inspired those who followed to give everything they had to reach the objective. A general's presence at the battle front or demonstration of physical courage can have an uplifting effect on the performance of his troops. Both Rommel and Patton were well known for going forward to the critical spot to exercise decisive control.<sup>40</sup> During the Civil War, when General Robert E. Lee would demonstrate courage by making a move to lead a charge, his men would forcibly coerce him to move to the rear...They knew his life could not be put in jeopardy.<sup>41</sup>

The following ancient fable expresses the result courage can have on leadership, "A flock of sheep led by a lion will prevail over a herd of lions led by a sheep."<sup>42</sup>

Courage, possibly more than any other attribute, illustrates the tenet of leading by example and the benefits a courageous leader can reap through the inspiration of courage. Whether one views courage as an aspect of character or an attribute capable of standing alone is immaterial and not in question. In leadership, the cold reality will always exist that somewhere along the line every leader will be faced with a situation or decision that will test his or her courage. A person not faced with decisions requiring courage is not leading and how one responds during those critical periods could very well be one of the true measures of leadership.

J.F.C. Fuller, the British Major General and armored warfare advocate between the World Wars wrote in his book Generalship: It's Disease and their Cures, "without... courage there can be no true generalship."<sup>43</sup>

Courage is commonly broken down into two general categories; physical and moral. Physical courage is bravery in battle, the willingness to risk one's life, while moral courage is simply the willingness to choose the harder right, instead of the easier wrong.<sup>44</sup>

Sun Tzu lists courage as a primary quality of a general and illustrates it by stating, "if courageous, he gains victory by seizing opportunity without hesitation."<sup>45</sup>

Clausewitz, in his discussion of military genius tells us, "war is the realm of danger; therefore courage is the soldier's first requirement."<sup>46</sup>

Thus, courage to lead without fear of personal danger and make the tough decisions is a test of leadership that all who lead must take. The test may be either moral or physical or a combination, and a passing grade may also depend on strengths in other attributes such as intellect, character, and knowledge.

## SKILLS

The attribute category of skills requires clarification more than any of the other four attributes because "skills" to most, pertains to a wide variety of talents. An artist possesses certain skills to create a picture and a craftsman

uses his skills to build a piece of furniture or build a new home.

However, for the purpose of this study, the skills a leader must have are defined as falling primarily into three general categories; communications, technical, and conceptual.<sup>47</sup>

Skills should not be confused with knowledge. Knowledge in any field of endeavor certainly plays a major role in the ability to develop a skill, but knowing about something and having the skill to use that knowledge requires different abilities.

Early in one's career, a leader spends considerable time honing technical skills such as learning how to fly a plane, operating a tank, or learning to fire an artillery piece. These technical skills are important because they help build a base of professional competence or expertise.

However, the technical skills a leader exercises at higher levels can be very different from the skills learned as a young leader. At the three and four star level, the skills of warfighting or formulating a campaign plan replace skills used at lower levels such as leading a tactical strike.

The ability to communicate effectively becomes more important as a career progresses, but what specifically are the communications skills a leader should have? Generally, communications skills fall into three categories; interpersonal, writing, and public speaking. First, a leader must have the ability to communicate with people at all levels in

a way that projects honesty, concern, and confidence. This type of communications is called interpersonal and includes a range of situations from one-on-one to public speaking.

A leader must listen carefully both up and down the chain of command and express his or her thoughts clearly and sincerely. Talking down to followers or becoming too casual reduces a leader's interpersonal communications effectiveness.

Next, a leader must be able to write effectively and make speeches that convey meaning and inspire followers to reach higher and become a part of the leader's vision. Written correspondence and articles on subjects of concern to the leader must communicate thoughts clearly and openly to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation. As a speaker, the leader must be able to command the attention of the audience and communicate the message effectively and powerfully.

In both interpersonal communications and public speaking, body language, voice inflection, and expressions add to the total message sent and can alter the meaning in either a positive or negative manner. Finally, in all three categories of communications, the leader's ability to persuade or even "sell" ideas can have a significant impact on the acceptance and ultimate success of the idea.

The following quote from Leadership and Social Change, by William Lassey summarizes why communications in

leadership is so important. "The complexity of interaction makes communications a difficult human act. An individual transmits messages, many of which he is unaware, but he cannot know which are received, or whether the perceptual screen of the other person has distorted the message he attempted to convey."<sup>48</sup>

Sometimes the best intentions of a leader are negated because in the act of communicating, the message the leader thought was sent, was not the same message received by the follower.

Finally, leader's must develop strong conceptual skills. To practice this skill, leaders gather relevant information through environmental scanning, make tough decisions which become less clear at higher levels, and reduce complexity by translating guidance into understandable operational objectives.<sup>49</sup>

## QUALITY "LEVELS"

Each of the leadership attribute categories discussed in the previous section; intellect, character, knowledge, courage, and skills, reflect the possibility that a leader could possess or attain a level of excellence in each of the attributes. That level could be very low, average, or the highest level possible in a particular area of expertise. For example, a leader could possess just enough knowledge in a field of endeavor to get by, or have a vast amount of knowledge relative to all aspects of his or her responsibilities. The leader could have weak communications skills or be capable of inspiring an audience with a powerful speech. In the areas of character or courage, the leader could have outstanding character but lack that spark of physical courage to lead his troops into battle. Finally, although hard to define, some leaders possess a high level of intellect and are able to solve complex problems, while others only go through the motions without fully considering all of the many variables that could affect a decision.

The purpose of assigning levels to each of the attribute categories is to illustrate how strengths or weaknesses could affect leadership potential.

In theory then, each leader attains a level of excellence or proficiency in each of the five attribute categories. That level could be high for knowledge and intellect while at the same time be low for character or courage.

If one assumes that to reach the strategic level of leadership in any given field of endeavor, the leader must also attain the highest level of excellence in all five of the leadership attribute categories, then it would also follow that a deficiency in any of the five categories could limit upward progress.

At this point, a clarification of what constitutes the highest level of excellence in an attribute category is necessary. The highest level of excellence for an attribute category is that level which enables the leader to masterfully use that attribute to realize a vision.

The levels of excellence required for any particular attribute could be different from one field of endeavor to another. For example, the physical courage required for a battlefield commander would be much different than that of a weapons system project manager. Both need courage to make tough decisions, but the danger associated with an office complex certainly does not compare to that found on the battlefield.

Thus, for each field of endeavor, there exists a theoretical highest level for each of the five attribute categories. In their book Leadership and Social Change, William Lassey and Richard Fernanded put it this way:

"It is quite unlikely that there is a single basic pattern of abilities and personality traits characteristic of all leaders. The personality characteristics of the leaders are not unimportant, but those which are essential, differ considerably depending upon the circumstances. The requirements for successful political leaders are different from those for industrial management or military or

educational leadership."<sup>50</sup>

In addition, these levels could be described as progressing from direct, to senior, and finally at the highest level, to strategic excellence. A leader could reach the senior or strategic level in several attributes but have a significant weakness in another attribute which could limit potential in that attribute to a lower level. Could this person be an effective senior level leader? Certainly, we have all seen or even worked for leaders with weaknesses, and in most cases the organization managed to get by. However, using the Quality Factor concept, it could be predicted that the effectiveness or productivity of the organization could be affected due to the weakness of the leader.

Thus, a significant attribute weakness in a leader could be a liability that might adversely affect the organization. In this situation, it could be said that the leader is "leading on borrowed time"!

This particular aspect of the Leadership Sum is similar in nature to the theory known as the "Peter Principle", which says "in a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetency".<sup>51</sup>

A smart leader must know or be aware of any attribute weaknesses and either compensate for it or improve before the weakness affects his leadership credibility. For example, a newly assigned leader without knowledge of a specific organization structure would need to learn how that structure works, or a leader who is not a particularly



good public speaker, might transmit his ideas better using written methods or improve that weakness through practice or professional help.

In summary, the Quality Factor is an expression of a leader's potential as it relates to levels of excellence attained in each of the five attribute categories. The levels are theoretical in nature and by definition could limit a leader's potential if a significant weakness exists. If a leader understands this concept, then an honest appraisal could enable the leader to improve or compensate for the weakness and thus raise his potential or Quality Factor.

## THE DIFFERENCE FACTOR

If attaining high levels in all of the five attribute categories was all it took to become a successful leader, it would seem to me that something was missing. Is there something beyond character, intellect, knowledge, courage, and skills, that can separate one leader from another, in effect being the difference between success or mediocrity in leadership?

There are that certain traits, characteristics, or even situations that can make the difference which results in truly successful leadership. It could be one particular factor or a number of factors working together in concert that allows the leader to achieve success where others only maintain the status quo. I call the cumulative effect of these influences the "Difference Factor".

In leadership, as in almost any other discipline, there exists those factors that can make the difference. But, what are some of the factors that make the difference? The following is a discussion of just some of the factors capable of making the difference in leadership. It is not meant to be an all inclusive list, but rather a starting point of ideas to illustrate how factors beyond the five attributes influence success in leadership. Understanding that factors do exist and working to maximize their positive influence on your own leadership situation is the real purpose of the Difference Factor.

If a person were given the opportunity to interview a

number of successful leaders and ask them the question; "What made the difference in you becoming a successful leader?", the answers would probably be as different as one fingerprint to another.

Some would say they were lucky, others would indicate hard work (desire), while even others would say they just happened to be in the right place at the right time. Would anyone outside of the military or even Army have heard of General Norman Schwarzkopf had it not been for the Persian Gulf war? He was in the right place, at the right time to use the skills and talents learned over the course of a career to lead the Coalition Force to victory. Were it not for the war, he would certainly have been a successful leader, but not to the degree he achieved as a result of the War.

Desire and ambition plays an extremely important role in success of any type. LTG Ira C. Eaker once said "there are no reluctant leaders. A real leader must really want the job."<sup>52</sup> We can all cite examples of a friend or fellow worker who possessed high marks in the Quality Factor attributes, but had no desire to do or be more than was required. On the other hand, there are others who have been weak in an important attribute such as character, who have risen to heights through sheer desire, determination, and by maximizing their other attributes. General Douglas MacArthur was known for his high intellect, courage, flamboyance, and a large number of amphibious landing victories. However,

some might question his character because he rarely gave credit to any of his subordinate commanders for their efforts. In this case, MacArthur was strong in the the other Quality Factor attributes, but a high level of ambition and military victories may have been what made the difference.

Luck can also make a difference in successful leadership, but in my opinion, only when the leader is prepared. Gary Player may have put it best after a fan accused him of making a lucky shot. He said " That's right. I practiced so hard, I got lucky."

A number of military generals have attributed luck to their success. Eisenhower said "there's a lot of changes or little bends in the way and finally you come to a particular spot. Regardless of character, ability, dedication to the job, etc. there is still a lot of luck."<sup>53</sup> He was also quoted as saying the following to General Patton, "George, you are not only a good general, you are a lucky general, and as you well remember, in a general, Napoleon prized luck above skill."<sup>54</sup>

Finally, General Omar Bradley sums up luck with the following:

"I would say luck plays an awfully large part in your success. You have to be able to perform when the opportunity occurs, however, the opportunity doesn't occur for everyone. I was very lucky, being at the right place at the right time to get a good job and having a lot of good people to help me do it. You have got to work hard, you have got to know your job, and there are certain characteristics of leadership you must always keep in mind, then hope that you are lucky."<sup>55</sup>

Another factor which has certainly played a major role in the success of some leaders is relationships. Relationships in the context of influencing leadership potential can take many forms. It could be the help of a college or military academy classmate, an influential family friend, a mentor, or a peer who has special knowledge of the leader's strengths.

Of the relationships that have catapulted leaders into situations that enabled them to "show their stuff", I submit that the military academy situation may be among the strongest. As a non-military academy officer, I compare it to the strong bonds formed in a college fraternity. The relationships formed during pledging and the camaraderie of living and doing things together throughout four years at college, enables the members to intimately learn the strengths and weaknesses of their fraternity brothers. In a normal college situation, the brothers are separated at graduation and seek their fortune in a variety of careers, whereas military academy graduates for the most part continue in the same general career path. At some point in the future, the intimate knowledge of a classmates ability could make the difference in that officer gaining an opportunity to lead.

Mentorship has also had a very strong influence on many a great leader's career. Using the Quality Factor concept, a mentor who recognizes some unique strength in a subordinate, in effect takes an active role to fill in the quality levels

in areas such as knowledge and skills by guiding that individual to the most advantageous assignments and military schools.

Finally, a factor that can really make a difference is charisma. People are drawn to leaders who are charismatic and without a doubt, these leaders have the potential to accomplish great things. But, when does a person develop charisma or is it a mysterious inborn aura that one either has or will never have? I certainly do not have the answer to this question, but I do have a few thoughts possibly worth consideration.

It could be said that Roosevelt, Churchill, Patton and Kennedy were charismatic leaders. What personality characteristic made them charismatic and would they be charismatic if they hadn't achieved such a high level of success in their respective field? I believe there is another factor that significantly influences charisma. That factor is the cumulative influence of what was earlier described as the Quality Factor.

People recognize quality and are drawn to it. Those with strong character, intellect, knowledge, courage, or exceptional skills possess a commodity that most either wish they had or are curious to witness. Thus, could it be that people who have attained high marks in the five attribute categories have acquired a level of charisma, or was it that mysterious quality of charisma or "heart" that inspired them to reach the top?

Whichever it is, is left to the reader, but clearly, charisma in leadership is one of the most valuable traits a leader can possess and it's benefits to any organization immeasurable. Bernard M. Bass, a leading scholar on leadership has said, "Charismatic leaders inspire in their followers unquestioning loyalty and devotion without regard to the followers' own self-interest. Such leaders can transform the established order".<sup>55</sup>

Thus, factors such as desire, luck, right place and right time, relationships, and charisma do exist and can have a significant impact on a leader's career and success in leadership. The leader must understand this concept and work to maximize those factors he can directly influence and accept the others as either fate or destiny.

## LEADER DEVELOPMENT

The question of leader development as it relates to the previously discussed Leadership Sum concept raises several questions. First, is it possible to measure or evaluate leadership potential (Quality Factor)? Second, is there an answer to the age old question, "are leaders born or made"; and finally, if leadership can be taught (leader development), what is the most effective method or technique to teach leadership?

### MEASURING LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

Should leadership potential be measured and if a true measurement is possible, at what point in a person's life should the test be administered? Would our leaders of today be the same people if, for instance, they had scored poorly on a leadership test in high school? Or, does a test of adults who have either achieved success or missed the mark, really prove anything? Finally, what about the late bloomer, would these individuals be excluded from the leadership hierarchy because of a test score?

In my view, the purpose of measuring any particular dimension of leadership should be with the intent of identifying possible areas for improvement to the leader. Blind spots, if you will, which the leader may not realize exists.

Not everyone is capable of reaching the pinnacle of success in leadership, but everyone to some extent has room



for improvement, even if it is just a better understanding of their capabilities.

There have been a number of studies conducted to measure leadership qualities. Two will be discussed here.

First, Dr. David P. Campbell, a Smith Richardson Senior Fellow in The Center For Creative Leadership, has developed a method of measuring the characteristics necessary to accomplish tasks of leadership. Those include; vision, management, empowerment, politics, feedback, entrepreneurship, personal style, and interrelationships of tasks. His method, called the Campbell Leadership Index (CLI) reduces several hundred descriptive adjectives on leadership into clusters (Scales) which are grouped into five "Orientations". Finally, an Overall Index was constructed by combining all of the CLI scored adjectives into one measure. The Orientation, Scales, and Overall Index form a scoring profile. In addition, the tests for this particular assessment are given to both the individual and an observer.<sup>56</sup>

A complete explanation and analysis of this instrument is not the purpose of this paper, however, according to Dr. Campbell, leadership characteristics can be measured. He also believes that the main purpose of his work should be to provide feedback for leaders to help them understand how they are "perceived by others".

Another effort at measuring a dimension of leadership has been developed by Dr. Siegfried Streufert. His

particular emphasis is on how executives think and make decisions. As a professor of Behavioral Science at Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Dr. Streufert developed a number of complex computer-assisted simulations to measure an executive's multidimensionality.

During the course of a day, an executive is subjected to a computer generated scenario designed to measure how and what the participating executives were thinking and deciding. It has been found through his method that successful entrepreneurs make a higher number of different kinds of decisions than their unsuccessful counterparts. The successful executive is able to change style and generate complex chains of strategies to cope with temporary emergencies.<sup>57</sup>

Dr. Streufert believes that an executive's multidimensionality functioning can be enhanced through training. For example, he cites where his training program has increased an executives capacity for planning by 37% and competent use of strategy by 38%.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, methods to measure leadership characteristics are available and in the future may provide useful feedback for leaders.

#### ARE LEADERS BORN OR MADE?

Warren Bennis and Burt Nannus in their book Leaders, The Strategies for Taking Charge, identify leaders being born and not made as a myth and say, "the truth is that major capacities and competencies of leadership can be

learned and we are all educable, at least if the basic desire to learn is there and we do not suffer from serious learning disorders."<sup>59</sup> John Gardner backs this statement by replying to the same question, "Nonsense! most of what leaders have that enables them to lead is learned."<sup>60</sup>

There is probably no clear-cut answer to the debate over leaders being born or made, but clearly, the seed of great leadership is planted in many and whether or not the leader blossoms surely depends on the nurturing gained through the experiences of life and the wisdom gained through learning.

#### TEACHING LEADERSHIP

The roots of leadership begin early in life. From my readings on this subject, it has become somewhat apparent to me that for many, the seed that eventually germinates into a future leader, was planted or nurtured by either childhood experiences or by the example and guidance of parents, friends, or other leaders.

Many of our country's most prominent military leaders either developed an interest in learning about history or the military by reading in their father's library (Marshall) or were sent to West Point (Sherman) by their parents, to develop discipline. It could be said that General Robert E. Lee developed a very strong character due to the childhood experience of his father abandoning the family. This required him at a very young age to care for his ailing mother and may have helped develop his strong character.<sup>61</sup>

The point of this is that leadership or the roots for leadership to some degree may be planted through family influences before any learning institution can formally introduce the concept. If this is true, leader development then becomes the task of schools, universities, and military education systems.

Educational institutions, in concert with parents and other family members, must find ways to inspire young people to learn about history, geography, other cultures, government, business, and all the other areas of learning so important for both personal and leader development.

To enhance leader development, curriculum should be flavored toward the enhancement of the five attribute categories. Certainly most schools emphasize learning knowledge and skills, which help build intellect, however, the disciplines of character and importance of courage must also be developed to enhance the Quality Factor.

Professional military education places strong emphasis on leadership training and must continue to work on new ways to develop future leaders.

Finally, I am convinced that leadership can be taught. The classroom is a life long endeavor that begins in childhood and requires a combination of God-given talents, desire, hard work, and some luck. It must be an ongoing process which is never quite satisfied. A true leader devotes his or her life to that cause or field that captures their imagination. They believe in what they are doing and

energize all of their efforts to achieving success. A leader never stops learning and to continue the cycle never stops teaching.

James Kouzes and Barry Posner sum up leadership development in the following way, "ultimately leadership development is self development. Musicians have their instruments. Engineers have their computers. Accountants have their calculators. Leaders have themselves. They are their own instruments."<sup>62</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Leadership Sum is a concept which emphasizes how excellence or deficiencies in key leadership attributes affect potential and success in leadership. It considers other factors such as luck and timing, however, the bottom line is the ability of the leader to maximize his or her leadership potential by developing high levels of excellence in character, intellect, knowledge, courage, and skills.

Certainly, no leader is perfect. All leaders possess shortcomings of one form or another. Recognizing those shortcomings and either improving them or compensating for them by maximizing other attributes, is necessary for the leader to reach full potential.

Not every leader will reach the top, however, just as every individual is a unique sum of their personality, intellect, and physical being, all leaders are the sum of their leadership attributes and other factors that contribute to either their success or failure.

Measuring leadership potential and performance is a field that can have a positive influence on future leaders. Efforts in this area, such as those of Dr. Campbell and Dr. Streufert are opening the doors to new techniques in the field of leader development. Certainly, a leader must be able to honestly appraise his or her own abilities, but, objective evaluations with the intent of improving leadership potential and skills can help leaders identify

their shortcomings and make the necessary improvements.

Success in leadership cannot be guaranteed based on any concept or personal development theory. However, leaders can use a concept such as the Leadership Sum to help them understand how excellence in the five leadership attribute categories and other factors which can make a difference contribute to success as a leader.

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